

Message Text

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72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10

RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02

AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 PA-04

PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /193 W
----- 066081

R 231256Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1642

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: TEXTILE STRIKE SETTLEMENT

REF: A) DURBAN 0023; B) DURBAN 0022; C) DURBAN A-109, 12/11/73

SUMMARY: STRIKING TEXTILE WORKERS CONSOLIDATED FRAME TEXTILE
MILLS PINETOWN/NEW GERMANY RELUCTANTLY RETURNED WORK
JANUARY 23 AT BEHEST AFRICAN TEXTILE WORKERS UNION FOLLOWING
AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT GRANT TOKEN WAGE INCREASES SENIOR
EMPLOYEES. WHILE STRIKERS OBTAINED ONLY SMALL WAGE INCREASE,
STRIKE SETTLEMENT VIEWED AS MORAL VICTORY FOR UNION WHICH FORCED
MANAGEMENT DEAL WITH UNION REPRESENTATIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. KWAZULU CUOUNCILLOR BARNEY DLADLA ACCOMPANIED BY UMLAZI MAYOR
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NGOBESE AND TWO ELECTED STRIKER REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH

CONSOLIDATED FRAME TEXTILE MANAGER ABRAHAM FRAME FOR FOUR HOURS JANUARY 22 WINNING MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT RAISE WAGES SENIOR EMPLOYEES. WORKERS WITH MORE THAN FIVE YEARS SENIORITY WILL RECEIVE IMMEDIATE INCREASE R0.40 PER WEEK; THOSE WITH MORE THAN TEN YEARS SERVICE GRANTED R0.80 INCREASE.

2. ALTHOUGH WORKERS EXPRESSED STRONG DISSATISFACTION HESE TOKEN WAGE INCREASES THEY RELUCTANTLY AGREED RETURN WORK AT BEHEST DLADLA AND AFRICAN TEXTILE WORKERS UNION LEADERSHIP WHO ASSURED THEM WAGE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD CONTINUE. DLADLA INDICATED HIS OWN DISSATISFACTION WITH INCREASE, DESCRIBING IT AS "PEANUTS", BUT EXPLAINED VICTORY ACHIEVED IN THAT MANAGEMENT HAD AGREED NEGOTIATE WITH BLACK UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND HAD BEEN FORCED RECOGNIZE WAGES TOO LOW BEFORE WORKERS RETURNED.

3. MANAGEMENT NEARBY DANO MILL (ONLY LARGE MILL OUTSIDE FRAME

GROUP EXPERIENCING STRIKE) ALSO INDICATED WILLINGNESS GRANT SENIOR WORKERS SIMILAR INCREASES BUT CONTINUED REFUSE DISCUSS ISSUE UNTIL STRIKERS RETURNED WORK. THEREAFTER, DANO MANAGER SAID, GRIEVANCES WOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH RECOGNIZED WORKS COMMITTEE.

4. IN MEETING WITH POLICE OFFICIALS DLADLA OBTAINED THEIR AGREEMENT REQUEST ATTORNEY GENERAL CHARGE ARRESTED STRIKERS WITH ONLY MINOR OFFENSES PERMITTING THEM PAY SMALL ADMISSION GUILT FINES AND OBTAIN RELEASE IN COURT APPEARANCE TODAY. NO ADDITIONAL ARRESTS WERE MADE AND DLADLA PRAISED POLICE RESTRAINT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WAGE INCREASES WERE MINISCULE, AFRICAN UNION WITH HELP DLADLA HAS WON NEW PRESTIGE BY PROVING ABILITY REPRESENT WORKERS GRIEVANCEE AND FORCING MANAGEMENT DEAL WITH IT. IT STILL TOO EARLY DETERMINE WHETHER AGREEMENT WILL ESTABLISH PRECEDENT LEADING INFORMAL RECOGNITION BLACK UNION BY HUGE FRAME TEXTILE GROUP. IF SO, OTHER TEXTILE COMPANIES WILL PROBABLY FOLLOW SUIT. SETTLEMENT PERSONAL VICTORY FOR DLADLA WHO GAINING INCREASING FOLLOWING AS AFRICAN LABOR SPOKESMAN.

6. STRIKE ALSO SETBACK FOR HARDLINE NATAL CHAMBER INDUSTRIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRIKE GUIDELINES (DURBAN A-109) WHICH ADVISED ITS MEMBERS MAKE NO WAGE OFFER UNTIL STRIKERS RETURNED WORK AND THEN ONLY THROUGH WORKS COMMITTEES. IT AGAIN DEMONSTRATED INABILITY MANAGEMENT DEAL WITH MASSIVE AFRICAN WALKOUTS IN ABSENCE TRADE UNIONS. AFRICAN WORKERS IN OTHER SECTORS MAY WELL NOTE THAT THIS STRIKE ACTION WAS SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING AT LEAST PARTIAL RECTIFICATION WORKERS GRIEVANCES.
HOLMES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXTILES, LABOR STRIKES, TEXTILE WORKERS, WAGE RATES, PICKETING, NEGOTIATIONS, STRIKE SETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DURBAN00025
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: DURBAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740122/aaaaauox.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) DURBAN 0023; B) DURBAN 0022; C) D, URBAN A-109, 12/11/73
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 JUN 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TEXTILE STRIKE SETTLEMENT
TAGS: ELAB, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005